

One of the most notable of all cartographic errors or myths, and one of the most identifiable, is seen on those maps which show the North American west coast with California depicted as an island after having been displayed correctly for half a century as a peninsula. Numerous fantastic descriptions attended European discoveries in the New World during the decades immediately following 1492. Legendary islands, cities of gold and fountains of eternal youth were desirable, possible, and believable, and were reinforced by a new popular literature: chivalric tales. Most of these myths were dispelled as the 16<sup>th</sup> century progressed. However, some persisted, primarily because they were ideal and not yet disproven. According to Mirela Slukan Altic, in the minds of European explorers, California existed as an idea before it was discovered. The earliest known mention of the idea of California was in the 1510 romance novel, *Las Sergas de Esplandián*, by Spanish author Garci Rodriguez de Montalvo. The book described the Island of California as being west of the Indies, "very close to the side of the Terrestrial Paradise; and it is populated by black women, without any man among them, for they live in the manner of Amazons."

The fantasy of California can be traced to a popular Spanish novel published in 1510 by Garda Ordonez de Montalvo, called *Las Sergas de Esplandian*, in which the author writes: *Know that to the right of the Indies there is an island called California very close to the side of the Earthly Paradise; and its inhabitants were black women, without a single man, for they lived in the manner of the Amazons. They were beautiful and their bodies robust, with fiery courage and great strength. Their island is the most formidable in the world, with its steep cliffs and stony shores. Their weapons are all made of gold, as are the harnesses they use to tame their wild beasts, because there is no other metal on the island other than gold.*

The first European who reached the present state of Baja California was Fortún Ximénez (?-1533). Sent by Hernán Cortés (1484-1547), he discovered the southern part of Baja California. Cortés himself followed up on the discovery with an expedition to La Paz, but the settlement had to be abandoned soon afterwards. Cortés' limited information on southern Baja California apparently led to the naming of the region after the legend of California and to an initial, but short-lived, assumption that it was a large island. In 1539, Cortés sent the navigator Francisco de Ulloa (?-1540) northwards along the Gulf and Pacific coasts of Baja California. Sailing north from Acapulco, Ulloa reached the head of the Gulf of California which he named the "Sea of Cortés" in honor of his patron. After he sailed the eastern and western coasts of California, it was clear that there was no passage between California and the mainland. An expedition under Hernando de Alarcón ascended the lower Colorado River and confirmed Ulloa's findings. Sebastian Vizcaíno (1548-1624) again surveyed the west coast in 1602, but Father Antonio de la Ascension who traveled with him, still claimed that California was separate from the mainland. According to those explorations, maps published during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, show California as a peninsula. The earliest map of the new land is a hand drawn map for Cortés about 1539. After

this map, all the best-known maps of the 16<sup>th</sup> century including those by Gerard Mercator and Abraham Ortelius, correctly show California as a peninsula.

The fundamental concept of the insularity of California was, therefore, a myth. The first known reappearance of the Island of California on a map dates to 1622 on a map by Michiel Colijn from Amsterdam, dating from publication of *Las Sergas del Muy Esforzado Caballero Esplandicin, Hijo del Excelente Rey Amadis de Gaula*, published by Gard Ordediez de Montalvo in Sevilla in 1510. Because of this publication, in the minds of European explorers California existed as an idea before it was discovered. Widely read by the conquerors of New Spain, the *Sergas*, in Chapter 157, states that “to the right hand of the Indies there was an island, called California...very close to the side of the Terrestrial Paradise which was populated by black women without any man among them, for they live in the manner of Amazons.... the island itself was the most covered with cliffs and rugged crags to be found ... on all the island there was no other metal (than gold) at all.” By pure coincidence, this island corresponded in location, reputed wealth, and female occupants to reports received by Hernán Cortés in Colima in 1522 and 1523 of an island off the west coast of *New Spain*.



California as a peninsula on map of Abraham Ortelius, 1571



So after nearly a 100 years of California's appearance on maps as a peninsula, a depiction of California as an island revived in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, the first known reappearance of the Island of California on a map dates to 1622 on a map by Michiel Colijn from Amsterdam. One contributing factor may have been the second voyage of Juan de Fuca in 1592. Fuca claimed to have explored the western coast of North America and to have found a large opening that possibly connected to the Atlantic Ocean – the legendary Northwest Passage. So after nearly a 100 years of California's appearance on maps as a peninsula, a depiction of California as an island revived in the early seventeenth century. Namely, Colijn's representation was immediately used by the most respectable cartographers of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, including Joan Vinckeboons, Nicolas Sanson (*Amerique Septentrionale*, Paris, 1650), Jan Jansson (*America Septentrionalis*, Amsterdam, 1641), John Speed (*America*, London, 1676), Pieter Goos (*Paskaerte van Nova Granada et t'Eylandt California*, Amsterdam, 1666), Frederick de Wit (*Novissima et Accuratissima Septentrionalis ac Meridionalis Americae Descriptio*, Amsterdam, 1690), Vincenzo Maria Coronelli (*L'Amerique Septentrionale ou la Partie Septentrionale du Indes Occidentales*, Paris, 1689 and *Provinciae Borealis Americae*. . . Munich, 1720), and many others.

In that 1540 supply expedition of Francisco Vazquez de Coronado en route to New Mexico, Hernando de Alarcon sailed up the Gulf and lower Colorado River to its confluence with the Gila. Letters left by Alarcon were found the following year by a detachment from the land expedition under sergeant Melchor Diaz, which crossed the river and entered continental California. Ulloa, Alarcon, and Diaz clearly dispersed any doubt relative to the peninsular geography of the region. Nevertheless, through popular use during the same period, these expeditionaries established the name of *California*, traditionally the name of an island. Cartographically, apart from the curious map of Alonso de Santa Cruz of 1542 showing the southern peninsula as a separate island named *ysla que descubrio el marques del valle* (Cortés), 16<sup>th</sup> century maps such as those of Giovanni Batista Agnese (1542), Giacomo Gastaldi's world map of c.1565 (#376), Gerard de Jode (1564), Bolognini Zaltieri (1566, #391), Abraham Ortelius (1564, #397), Joan Martines, Portolan Atlas, 1587 (#416) and their successors Mercator (#406) and Hondius (#421.4, #433), displayed California as a peninsula, separated from the Sonora coast by a gulf terminating at the mouth of the Colorado River. Thus, the geographic question appeared to be permanently resolved.

The earliest map of the new land is a hand drawn map for Cortés about 1539. After this map, all the best known maps of the 16<sup>th</sup> century including those by Gerard Mercator<sup>4</sup> and Abraham Ortelius, correctly show California as a peninsula. However, numerous maps exist which demonstrate that the disproven island theory was seriously held by many mapmakers for over one hundred years after 1622. Subsequently, the first known reappearance of the island of California on a map dates to 1622 on a map by Michiel Colijn from Amsterdam published as a title page of *Descriptio Indiae Occidentalis per Antonium de Herrera*.

The "island" theory emanated from Spanish reports identifying the mouth of Baja and a great bay in the north that were presumed to join. The navigator Juan de la Fuca was responsible for some of the wildest cartographic misconceptions ever mapped. It was his report in 1592, of the large opening in the American west coast that prompted this theory and numerous others, current for nearly 200 years, suggesting

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the possibility of a channel linking the Pacific to the Hudson Bay and thence to Europe, i.e., the long sought northwest passage or "Strait of Anián".

The mapping of California as an island has been captured by Glen McLaughlin in his collection of nearly 800 maps in the Sanford University Library and online at [www.exhibits.stanford.edu](http://www.exhibits.stanford.edu). Below are some of my favorite examples of this 200-year old myth.



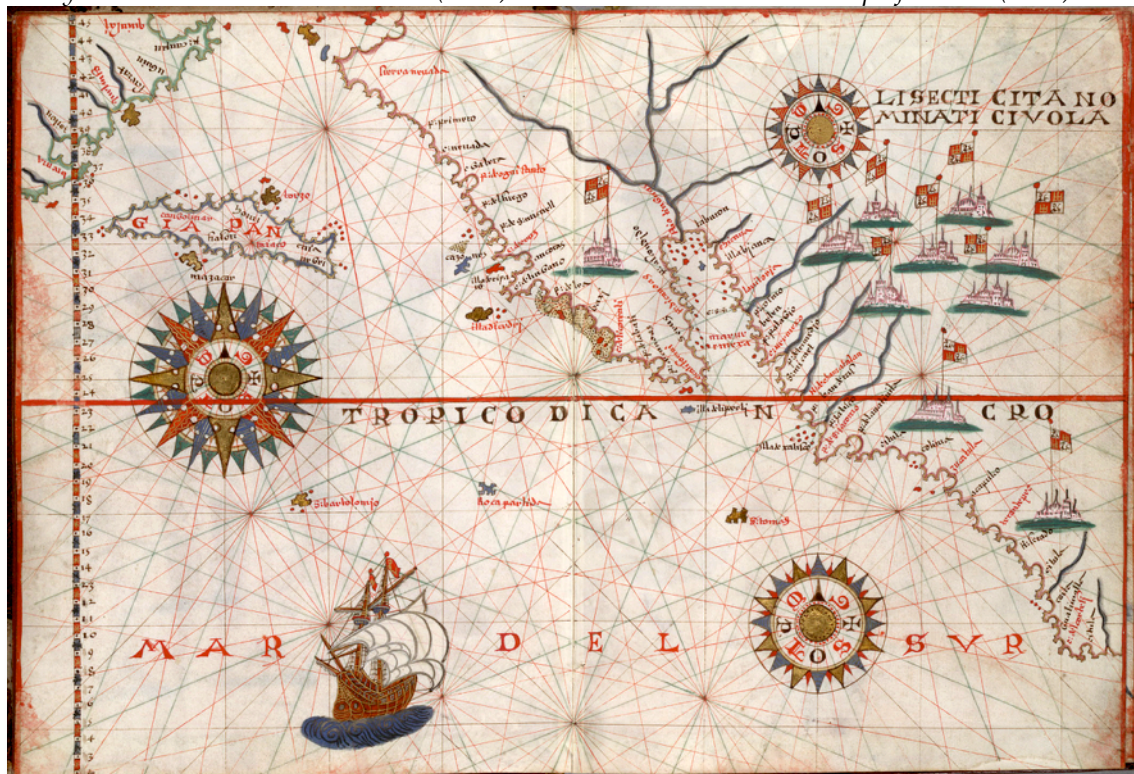
*Abraham Ortelius' First Map (1564) and the basis for de Jode's cordiform world map (#397)*



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*Cosmographia Universalis Et Exactissima Iuxta Postremam Neotericorum Traditionem*  
by Giovanni Francesco Camocio (#404) based on Gastaldi's world map of c.1561 (#376)



Joan Martines, *Portolan Atlas*, 1587 (#416)  
#11, North Pacific Ocean, including coasts of Mexico, California, Cibola, Asia, and Japan



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*The North Part of America, Henry Briggs, 1625 (#461)*

*The north part of America conteyning Newfoundland, New England, Virginia, Florida, New Spaine and Nova Francia, with ye rich Iles of Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica and Porto Rieco on the south and upon ye west the large and goodly island of California. The bonds of it are the Atlantick Ocean on ye South and East sides ye south sea on ye west side and on ye North Fretum Hudson and Buttons baye a faire entrance to ye nearest and most temperate passage to Japan & China in: Samuel Purchas. Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes: Contayning a History of the World in Sea Voyages and Lande Travells by Englishmen and others, Vol. XIV. Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1625.*

Henry Briggs (1561-1630), was a famous mathematician and mapmaker, also interested in astronomy, geography and navigation. Amongst his many achievements was the invention of logarithms to the base 10. The Northwest Passage was another of his specialties, so he naturally paid close attention to Francis Drake's world voyage.

Briggs knew well Drake's discoveries below the Strait of Magellan. He was a close colleague of Edward Wright whose map of the world, included in Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* (1600), recorded those discoveries in accurate detail. It was thus quite natural for Briggs, together with another friend, Samuel Purchas, to be very

critical of the claim of William Schouten and Jacob Le Maire to have discovered Cape Horn. Purchas wrote:

And my learned friend Master Briggs told me he had seene a plot of Drake's voyage, cut in silver, many yeeres before Scouten or Maire intended that voyage.

They had another reason to be scornful. Schouten recorded the latitude of Cape Horn as 57° 48' S, over 100 miles in error. What a contrast to Francis Drake's accurate measurement of Cape Elizabeth so many years earlier!

Briggs provided the map of North America published in *Purchas his Pilgrims*, Volume III, 1625. Made before 1622, it is one of the most important of the time. As a composite, place names are recorded reflecting the nationality of the discoverer, in English, French or Spanish. The map shows California as an island; Briggs notes on the map that this information came from a Spanish chart captured by *ye Hollanders*. Perhaps the chart was taken during the Dutch raid on Acapulco in 1615.

The Spanish Father Antonio de Ascension, a member of Sebastián Vizcaino's expedition of 1602, was responsible for the enormous error in the mapping of California; misinformation which persisted for more than a century. Briggs seized on the idea, because it fit conveniently with his theory of a narrowed continent and a Northwest Passage. If correct, it would provide a route from Hudson's Bay to the Gulf of California. However, the enormous mistake does not affect the detailed charting of the small part of the west coast, which is of the greatest interest to Drake historians. Briggs's map obviously benefited from Spanish data, which enabled him to record some latitudes more accurately than those on Edward Wright's map. For example, Wright gives 43° N for Cape Mendocino, whereas Briggs has it at an accurate 40° 30' N. It is evident that Briggs was so impressed by Father Antonio's map that he copied it precisely, ending the west coast abruptly and horizontally at Cape Blanco. Edward Wright wisely refrains from delineating an unknown coastline beyond 44° N, marking it there as *Nova Albion*.

A legend in the lower left corner of Briggs' map refers to a *Spanish Charte* which identifies California *to be a goodly Islande...* . Although Briggs' map is interesting as one of the earliest maps of North America alone and for its detail of the north and eastern coast lines, it is for the outline of California that it is best known.

Most interesting of all is Briggs' record of Francis Drake's California harbor as *Po. Sr Francisco Draco* and shown accurately inside *Punta de los Reyes* at 38° N. Surely this must be the earliest cartographic record of sufficient scale and accuracy to enable the position of Drake's California sojourn to be precisely located. Considering that the map is so well known, it is surprising that this important part of it has been generally ignored by Drake's biographers. Probably, it has been regarded as an unreliable source, because of its very large error. Certainly, major questions arise, and some of them are very odd indeed. How did Briggs come to make his very accurate placing? Was it by good judgment, or did he possess some inside information? Why was the rather peculiar combination of words used to name the port? What was, or was not, marked on the Spanish chart? Did Briggs name the port at all? We just do not know, but it is interesting, nevertheless, to speculate.

The Briggs map was in advance of *The World Encompassed* and well before the Dudley maps, drawn about 1635 and published in 1647. One could suppose, then, that Briggs simply indicated Francis Drake's harbor onto the Spanish chart, at what he believed to be the correct latitude, which he may already have known, or, could have read from *The Famous Voyage* account in Hakluyt. Conveniently this placed the port

near Point Reyes already marked on the chart - how fortunate! Edward Wright with the same information available did not mark in the harbor on his own map - a curious omission.

Alternatively, it might have been the other way round. Perhaps Briggs knew what to look for. He was hoping to see a notable point at about the right latitude and found one on the chart - Point Reyes. How was he able to do this? Briggs had very good contacts by moving in the right circles. He may very well have had access to the same information that had guided Robert Dudley to draw his remarkable maps of Drake's harbor. On Dudley's map Point Reyes is not named but called *La Punta*.

However, both the above explanations beg the question of the very strange combination of English, Spanish and Latin that Briggs used to name the port *Po.* for *Puerto* is definite and is clearly the same as the other examples on the map. *Sr* for *Sir* is differentiated from the many *St* markings. *Francisco* is in the Spanish form, but then for Briggs to add *Draco*, Latin for dragon, for Drake is strange indeed. On the Dudley maps *Draco* is also used, but those maps were made in Italy. Surely, one would think, the patriotic Henry Briggs would have kept to an English name for an English discovery on an English map? Surely, he would have wished to have proudly inserted *Po. Sir Francis Drake* amongst the Spanish names, especially as he carefully used many English names on the eastern seaboard of the same map. The words used seem to be more akin to the work of a Spaniard - although, if so, one might have expected to see *Draque* rather than *Draco*.

All this leads one to wonder just what might have been marked on the Spanish map, near Point Reyes, before Briggs got to work. Possibly it might have been marked *B. de St Francisco*, recording their first name for the present Drake's Bay. Briggs could then simply make minor alterations and add the word *Draco*. Again, this seems unlikely for the reasons already given.

So, if Briggs did not write these words, who did? Were they already on the chart made by Father Antonio de Ascension, and Briggs simply copied them as he did for all other names on this western side of his map? Father Antonio had certainly visited Drake's Bay, albeit briefly. He also had an interest in Drake's activities which he demonstrated later when he relayed the well known story about Drake's Portuguese pilot, Morena. There is, of course no suggestion in the records of either the 1595 Cermeño or 1602 Vizcaino voyages that the Spanish had gained any knowledge of Drake's landfall. However, if they had done so, it would normally have been kept a close secret. Later, about 1620, Father Antonio and Gerónimo Martin Palacios compiled a *derrotero* [course outline] of the entire coastline. The same *derrotero* was used by Basil Ringrose to derive the information and charts north of Acapulco for his own *South Sea Waggoner*. Ringrose records in detail the anchorages within Point Reyes, including Drake's *Estero*, but he does not name any of them, nor mentions Francis Drake; whereas he does so in other parts of the *Waggoner* dealing with the South American coastline. Also another important point emerges: Ringrose faithfully records all the Spanish names for ports and bays all the way down the coastline. Most significantly, he makes no mention of *Bahia de St Francisco* within Point Reyes, so these particular words were not on the chart in Father Antonio's *derrotero* and, very likely, not on his original chart captured by the Dutch.

Unfortunately, no definite conclusion can be drawn from this seesaw of conflicting speculation. The most intriguing aspect of Henry Briggs' famous map remains a mystery. A most important mystery nonetheless and one deserving of



further research. One can reflect, however, perhaps with a touch of wry amusement, that the fine detail of Francis Drake's Californian harbor, shown in Robert Dudley's manuscript map, coupled with the precise information indicated by Henry Briggs, should have permitted no controversy about the location of *Portus Novae Albionis* post 1647.

Thirteen years elapsed between Thomas Button's primal discovery of the larger portion of the Hudson Bay coast of Manitoba and its delineation on a published map in 1625. The Briggs map is a very simple one in appearance but it is basic for the future story of northwestern exploration and cartography. It was used later by Captains Foxe and James in their searches for a western water passage from the Bay, and from it a group of maps evolved, continuing and augmenting the configurations first presented upon this map. A Gerritsz-type east shore and James Bay shore is extended north to approximately 56 degrees. Very likely Briggs did not carry the coast north to 60 degrees latitude, as Gerritsz, because Button had sailed southwest from the entrance to Hudson Bay to approximately 58 degrees north in the Bay and had not sighted the supposed shore by this latitudinal position. From the end of the Gerritsz-type coast there is a gap approximately two degrees of latitude and some five degrees of longitude, after which Button's west coast, beginning at Port Nelson, curves in a great arc north into Roe's welcome to the 65<sup>th</sup> degree of latitude. In this area there is a large peninsula projecting out from the west mainland, which represents un-circumnavigated Southampton Island. The large bight thus formed was named *Button's Bay*. There were three other gaps left in the western shore of the Bay indicating three major straits, considered to be possible avenues of future exploration west to the Western Sea. Button gave the name of *New Wales* to the land lying west of the newly discovered coast and *Port Nelson* to the estuary of the Nelson river thereby affixing the first two place-names to Manitoba territory.



Johannes Vingboon's Map of California, 1650



Island of California, Jan Jansson, 1641

The Briggs map ranks as one of the most important and influential printed maps of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, particularly see *Sherer's maps*, #492. While noteworthy as the first English map to show California as an island, the map has many other important features. While the map post-dates Goos 1624 map showing California as an island, most authorities believe that the Briggs map was the source map for the Goos. Briggs wrote of California's insularity as early as 1622. Similar errors appear on both, and the East Coast and English nomenclature are similar, particularly in New England, where only the English had explored to that date. Philip Burden surmises that the Briggs map may have either been issued first or that the maps have a common English source. If the Briggs was issued first, it is therefore the first to name *Hudson Bay*, *Fretum Hudson*,



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*Hudsons R, Cape Cod* and *De la war Bay*. The map was issued in the third book of Purchas' *Pilgrimes*. The map gives credit to Spanish sources for the insular California theory. Vizcaino's 1602 expedition to the west coast is noted, including the first appearances of *San Diego* and *San Clemente*. The map is the first to name *Santa Fe*, founded in 1608 and also shows the cities of *Plymouth* and *James* on the East Coast. Only one state of map is known. Perhaps the single most important map of North America of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

Also as evidenced on this map, in 1625 the English knew nothing of the Great Lakes or of the Mississippi River

Briggs' map became the standard outline, being used by such cartographers as John Speed, Jansson, Sanson in 1650 and many others. Then, in 1656, Nicolas Sanson produced a new map showing a different outline (broader and with an indented north coast) which was either copied in its entirety, or combined with the original outline on many maps throughout the rest of the century.



AMERIQUE SEPTENTRIONALE, Nicolas Sanson, 1650

The map above is an example of a pivotal map that inaugurated a new era in the cartography of North America, as dominance in mapmaking turned decidedly in favor of the French. In addition to being one of the earliest obtainable maps to show all five Great Lakes in a recognizable form, this map was also the first to name Lakes Superior and Ontario. It was also the first map to locate Sante Fe and the Apache and Navajo tribes, along with other innovations in the Southwest. This was one of the first maps published in France to depict California as an island. Due to Sanson's prestige, this map would insure acceptance of the myth among French cartographers for several decades.



Strangely, before the insular theory was promulgated, California had been shown correctly as a peninsula on all maps of the world, the Americas and the Pacific. Even after 1622, many map makers did not accept the theory, or at least displayed an open mind - not by leaving the area blank, but in many atlases showing one theory on the world map and the alternative on the map of America. Even Joan Blaeu in the *Atlas Maior* demonstrates this - the map of America (first engraved c.1619) not being altered, whereas the world map shows the island theory. Sanson's map of 1656 is the first to concentrate on the California/New Mexico region only. During the next decades maps, showing the area in isolation, are found in sea atlases by Doncker, Van Loon, Goos, and others, and in many land atlases by Sanson, Morden, Mallet, Du Val, Coronelli, de Fer, etc. In addition to maps of California the collector of island-theory maps should look at maps of North America, the Americas, the Pacific and the world - all of which may show differing detail or presentation.

The first to render California's newly divorced state was Michiel Colijn of Amsterdam, on the title page of *Descriptio Indiae Occidentalis* in 1622. The island misconception was then reproduced as a matter of course for decades: by Abraham Goos in 1624; by John Speed in 1627; by Henry Briggs in 1625; and Richard Seale in 1733-45. In fact, 249 maps showing California Island (not including world maps) were identified by the historians Glen McLughlin and Nancy H. Mayo in 1995. For the entire 17<sup>th</sup> century, and for most of the 18<sup>th</sup> cartographers wrenched California free from the American continent and set it adrift in the Pacific Ocean.

The mythical reinvention is thought to have originated from the 1602 voyage of Sebastian Vizcaino up the Californian coast, an account of which was written twenty years later by the Carmelite friar Antonio de la Ascension, who had been on board Vizcaino's ship. In this journal, Ascension describes California as being separated from the mainland by the '*mediterranean Sea of California*'. His descriptions were mapped and issued to Spain, but the vessel carrying the records was hijacked by the Dutch, and the misinformation was accepted and adopted by their publishers.

In Holland, Germany and England maps showing California as an island continued to be engraved and published well into 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, maps contesting the theory were being published in France from after 1705 when the Jesuit Missionary, Father friar Eusebio Kino, who was initially a believer in the island notion, made a series of journeys from Sonora to the Colorado river delta by walking from New Mexico to the California Pacific coast, confirmed that California was indeed part of the North American mainland. However, it was not until mid-century, in 1747, that King Ferdinand VII of Spain decreed that California was not an island.

Major cartographers such as Willem Blaeu and Herman Moll fell for the blunder, and lent it credence with their own reproductions. It wasn't until 1706 that doubt began to be cast. The reports of Juan Bautista de Anza, from his 1774 travels between Sonora and the west coast of California, effectively reattached the island to the mainland, although, strangely, it makes one curious, much later appearance on a Japanese map by Shuzo Sato in 1865.

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*Pascarte van de Zuydt-Zee, Joan Blaeu, 1650*



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AUDIENCE DE GUADALAJARA, NOUVEAU MEXIQUE, CALIFORNIE, &c,  
Nicolas Sanson, 1656, 20.5 x 22.4 cm.



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*Paskaerte Van Nova Granada. en t'Eylandt California ... Goos, P. [Amsterdam, 1666]  
Pieter Goos was the preeminent publisher of sea atlases of his period, and his work was  
esteemed by both seamen and wealthy merchants.*



### *California as an Island*



*America Settentrionale . . .*, Vincenzo Maria Coronelli, 1690, 53 x 81 cm, #488

Vincenzo Maria Coronelli's cornerstone map of North America (#488), one of the most influential maps of North America published in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century. Coronelli's map of North America appeared in his *Atlante Veneto*.





A historiography of the Americas by Antonio Herrera y Tordesillas began with his *Descripción de las Indias*, published in 1601, the first to display California as an island.

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Detail from Atlas de Pedro Texeira 1634

The Jesuit missionary and cartographer Eusebio Francisco Kino (1645–1711) revived the fact that Baja California is a peninsula. While studying in Europe, Kino had accepted the insularity of California, but when he reached Mexico he began to have doubts. He made a series of overland expeditions from northern Sonora to areas within or near the Colorado River's delta in 1698–1706, in part to provide a practical route between the Jesuits' missions in Sonora and Baja California but also to resolve the geographical question. Kino was satisfied that a land connection must exist, so his maps show California as a peninsula. In this regard, his map "*Passage par terre a la Californie*" based on his research made between the years 1698 and 1701 is particularly important. Although the map was known to a wide circle of cartographers and church authorities, the official statement of Spain that California was an island, did not change. This stance was followed by European cartographers and the view of California as an island was still held until the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in some places (Heinrich Scherer (*Provinciae Borealis Americae*. . . Munich, 1720), Herman Moll (*North America*, ca.1720), and Matthauss Seutter (*Novus Orbis Sive America*, Augsburg, 1750). This was especially supported by cartographer Herman Moll who claimed that he had personally spoken with one captain who had circumnavigated the island of California.





Map of Eusebio Francisco Kino, 1701

*California as an Island*



*A NEW MAP OF AMERICA From the latest Observations. John Senex, 1719*



*California as an Island*



*Novus Orbis sive America by Matthew Seutter*

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*An extract from John Senex's map of 1719 also showing the mythical Lake Thonga or Thoya, sometimes called "The Lake of the West", as well as California [Nova Albion] as an island.*

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California as an island on the map of Henry Moll, 1720



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*L'Amérique, meridionale, et septentrionale Dressee selon les Dernieres Relations et suivant les Nouvelles Decouvertes dont les points prin;; cipaux sont placez sur les Observations de Mrs. de l'Academie Royale des Sciences. 18.25 x 23.5 inches (#494)*

This is a portion of Nicolas de Fer's 1699 map of America, in the second state, printed in 1705. Both of the first two states of this map were separately issued, and are consequently rare. This detailed and richly annotated map, derived from De Fer's own 1698 *L'Amérique Divisee Selon Letendue de set Principales Parties*, shows the Americas during a period in which France was dominant in the exploration and mapping of North America. Its superb engraving is the work of Harmanus Van Loon, who also engraved De Fer's larger-scale work. California is shown in insular form, one of the last instances of this prior to the correction of the myth in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. The version presented here is often erroneously referred to as the 'Sanson Model.' The term is in fact derived from a 1635 map of the North American Arctic drawn by Luke Foxe. It was Foxe who invented many of the place names as well as added various bays and inlets to northern California. Among these are *Talaaago*, *R. de Estiete*, and the curious peninsula extending westward from the mainland, *Agubela de ceto*. Foxe's sources remain a mystery and his mapping may be based upon nothing more than fantasy, but Sanson embraced the model whole heartedly. Although Sanson did not invent this form of insular California, his substantial influence did popularize it with subsequent cartographers.

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Robert de Vaugondy's summary of depictions of California, 1772

### CARTE DE LA CALIFORNIE

Suivant I. la Carte manuscrite de l'Amerique de Mathieu Neron Pecciolen dressée a Florence en 1604. II. Sanson 1656. III. De l'Isle Amerique Sept. 1700. IV. le Pere Kino Jesuite en 1705.

V. la Societe des Jesuites en 1767. La Cote orientale depuis le C. des Vierges jusqu'a l'embouchure du R. Colorado est extraite de la Carte du P. Ferdinand

Gonsaque dressée en 1746, 11.5 X 15 inches.

These California maps are from a collection of ten maps made to accompany the various articles on "America," "Asia" and the "Arctic Regions" in Diderot's *Encyclopedie, ou Dictionnaire raisonne des Sciences, des Arts, et des Metiers*, which appeared in Paris 1770-79.

The achievements of the first explorers along the coast of California, Francisco de Ulloa, 1539- 40; Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo, 1542-43; and Sir Francis Drake, 1579, have already been noticed in this volume: Two Spaniards followed shortly, Sebastian Rodrigues de Carrnaron, 1595, and Sebastian Viscaino, 1602-03.

The earliest map-makers depicted the coast of California as a peninsula and part of the mainland of the continent, as may be seen in the maps of Agnese (#371), Sebastian Cabot (#372), Zalteri (#391), and Mercator (#406). The maps collected by de Vaugondy shown here date from a few years after the death of Mercator, and are described as follows:

I. The Italian map of 1604, representing the results of the expedition of Viscaino, 1602-03, agrees with the earlier maps in showing California as a part of the continent.



II. Sanson's map of 1656 is not the earliest map showing this coast as an island, for the Briggs map shown above, containing this new conception, is a quarter of a century earlier. In the interesting legend on his map Briggs states that the insular theory as to California was to be traced back to a map taken by the Dutch from a Spanish ship soon after 1600. In general agreement with this is Phillip Buache, who, in his *Considerations Geographiques*, dates the insular theory from the year 1620. On the other hand, the German Jesuit, Father Kino, makes the statement that it was a map of Sir Francis Drake that deceived Europe concerning the true relation of California with the mainland. *Pto. de Fracisco Draco* on Sanson's map calls attention to the common location of this point on the early maps. The Briggs map of 1625 has the same, *Po. Sr. Francisco Draco*; De Lisle in 1701 has *P. de Drak*, as may be seen in No. III of this present map plate; the Russian map of 1758 has *Port de Francois Drake, faussement appelle d St. Francois*; two Spanish maps, one by Migue Costanso, 1770, and another by Tomas Lopez 1772, have *Pto. de S. Francisco*.

Sanson locates on his map *P. de S. Diago*, discovered by Cabrillo in 1542, who called the place *San Miguel*. Viscaino visited the same spot in 1602 and celebrated there the feast of San Diego, hence the name.

III. In his map of 1700, Guillaume Delisle seems to be in doubt as to whether or not California is an island; but there is evidence that later in this same year he accepted the insular theory.

Philip Lee Phillips, in his *Lowery Collection*, quotes the following from Jules Marcou: "Of all the geographers at the close of the seventeenth and commencement of the eighteenth century Guillaume Delisle, first geographer of the King of France, Louis XIV, is the one who has shown himself the most sagacious. In a letter to M. Cassin without date, but which must have been written about the year 1698, and which was published at Amsterdam by Jean Frederick Bernard in his *Recueil de Voyage au Nord*, Delisle shows a mind filled with sound criticism and a clear knowledge of facts concerning California. Delisle, after having well considered the matter, states that he thought it prudent to leave blank, as unknown that part of the globe, and to make California neither an island nor a part of the continent, and to await something more positive before arriving at a decision. He did not have to wait a long time, for in his map of North America dated 1700, Delisle joined California to the continent, and he maintained that California was a peninsula in his map of 1702. It is evident that after the commencement of the year 1700 Guillaume Delisle must have received information of the discovery, by the Jesuit Father Kino, of the passage by land from New Mexico to California, which this missionary had made during 1698.

"Beginning with the maps of Guillaume Delisle, the truth triumphed. Soon most map-makers adopted his opinion and made use of the famous discovery of Father Kino, joining California as a peninsula to the American continent. Although some, like R.W. Seale in his 1745 map (shown below) continued the island concept.

IV. Philip Lee Phillips, in his *Lowery Collection*, gives a long bibliographical note on Kino's epoch-making map, which appeared in 1705. The original map is in the archives of the Indies in Seville, Spain. The first copy of the map to be published seems to have been that in the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* of the Jesuits. This was soon copied in *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London* and in many other places.

The Jesuit priest Eusebio Francisco Kino is perhaps best remembered for establishing Mission San Xavier del Bac, just south of present-day Tucson. During the

course of his twenty-four years' residence in the Americas, the Italian-born priest founded a number of other missions throughout northern Mexico, Arizona, and New Mexico, fulfilling a promise he had made as a young man to serve God as a missionary.

When Eusebio Francisco Kino, a Jesuit, 1644-1711, set out from Europe for Mexico in 1681, he believed that California was connected with the mainland, but this view, which was that commonly held at the time by European scholars, he discarded in 1698, declaring that California was the largest island in the world. The reverend father, however, was greatly interested in the scientific aspects of geographical matters, and after making forty or more expeditions through the present northwestern parts of Mexico and southern Arizona (Kino's *Pimeria*) and southern California, in the course of which he traveled many thousand miles on horseback, he came back to his original view, which he recorded in the map of 1701, here reproduced.



Father Eusebio Francisco Kino's map of California, 1701





*Map of peninsula by Father Kino, 1702, in Venegas-Burriel*

Kino was in California for a short time in 1683; his first visit there. In 1698 he was on the eastern coast of the Gulf of California at *M de S Claire* and beyond in the north and west; in 1699 he reached the river Azul north from Mount Sainte Claire; in 1700 he crossed the *Rio Azul* to the Colorado; and in the next year he crossed the Colorado into California. On these explorations he heard the tales of the Indians that the ocean could be easily reached by land, and at various points inland he found blue shells, which he conjectured must be from the Pacific. He came to the head of the Gulf of California in 1702, where he was able to add certainty to his slowly forming opinions.

Kino's interest in geographical matters is attested not only by his explorations but by various writings, including a *Cosmographical Demonstration that California is not an Island but a Peninsula, and that it is continuous with this New Spain, the Gulf of California ending in latitude 35 degrees*, and his *Diary*. This remarkable record, his *Diary*, was not published in his day, but remained in manuscript form until 1919, when it was published by Herbert E. Bolton, who found it in the City of Mexico in 1907.

The only contemporary allusions to Kino's great achievement were the publication of the map, and a brief reference in a letter by Pere le Gobien, the editor of the *Lettres Edifiantes*. Says Gobien: "He passed the river Azul, in 1700 was near the Colorado, and having crossed this he was surprised in 1701 to see that he was in California, and to learn that about thirty or forty leagues from the place where he then was, the Colorado, after forming a bay of quite large extent, went on to empty into the sea on the east coast of California, which was thus separate from New Mexico by only the waters of this river."

In 1701, after several more trips across the region, Kino reported his findings to his superiors in Mexico City. He included a manuscript map. The map disappeared into the archives and was never published in Mexico, but it did reach Europe. The most plausible explanation is that Kino sent a copy to Father Bartolome Alcazar, a friend and mathematics instructor at the Colegio Imperial in Madrid. Alcazar redrew the map so that engravers could more easily read the names and forwarded it on to French Jesuits in Paris. They in turn hired the renowned French map engraver Inselin to make a copperplate of the map, and it was first published in 1705 in Jesuit journals. It was subsequently recopied and reprinted widely throughout Europe.

Cartographers began to revise their maps to reflect Kino's information, but obviously not everyone followed suit. Changing a copperplate required hammering out the unwanted lines and re-engraving new ones. A number of mapmakers continued using the old plates for years. As late as 1732 Herman Moll, the Dutch-born mapmaker based in London, continued to show California as an island on his maps; he once indignantly declared that he had had sailors in his office who had sailed completely around it.

V. The mapping of the Jesuit missions in southern California is a copy of Kino's map of 1701, brought down to date, 1767, with the assistance of the Gonsaque map of 1746.



## California as an Island

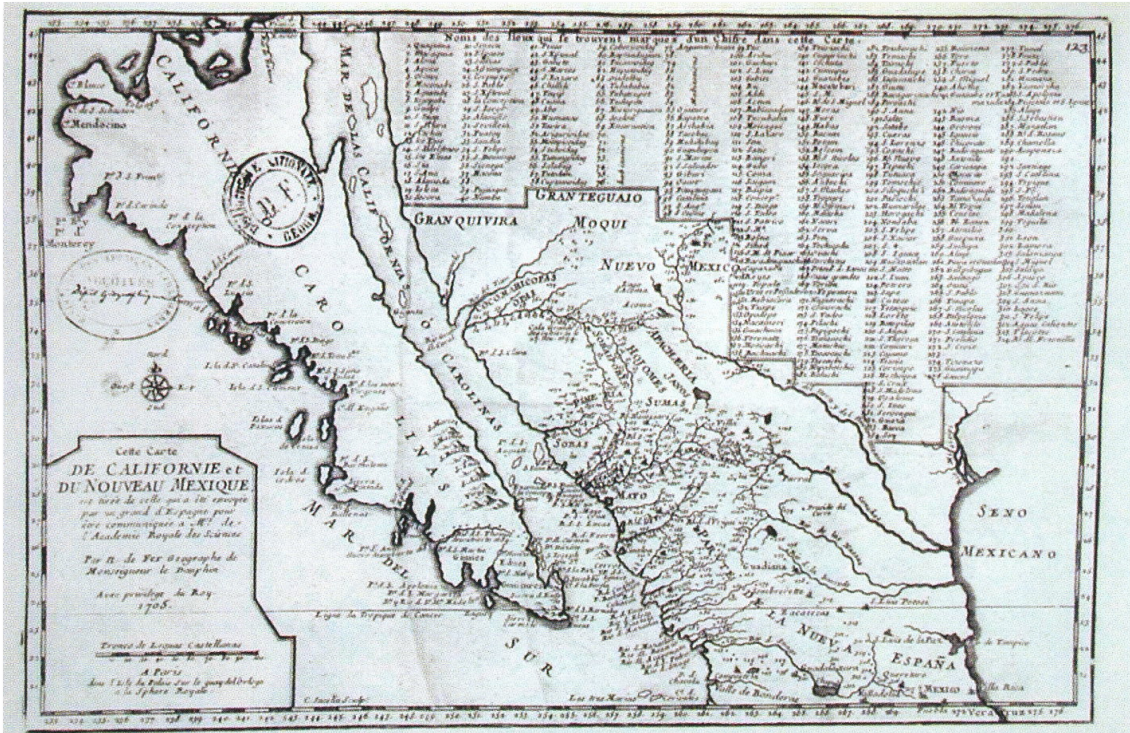


PLATE XIV Nicolas de Fer's first pirated copy of Kino's 1695–1696 map (Plate VIII), printed in Paris in 1705. The numbers on the map correspond to the 314 towns listed at the top of the chart; except for the omissions and misspellings, they reproduce those found on Kino's original 1695–1696 map (see Plate VIII).

Nicholas de Fer pirated Kino's manuscript map of 1695, made when Kino still believed in an insular California, and printed it as his own in 1705.



A Map of North America with Hudson's Bay and Straights, 1748





A portion of the legendary large Wall Map of America by Frederick de Wit, first published in 1662, here in its final state by Reinier and Josua Ottens ca 1730.

Ferdinand Konsčak (Fernando Consag, 1703-1759) was a Croatian Jesuit and a missionary who carried out the exploration of Baja California according to the order of *Compañía de Jesús*. In 1730 he was assigned to the missions in Baja California, where he worked until his death. During his missionary work, he made three major research expeditions (1746, 1751, 1754) and made at least two maps of Baja California. His diaries from the first and second trips, in which he gave descriptions of the terrain and the people of Baja California, were published during his lifetime and have been enjoyed even after his death in several editions and in various languages. His map, *Seño de California y su costa oriental*, played a special role after the existence of a California peninsula was officially accepted. Although F. E. Kino and J. de Ugarte had claimed this on their own maps before him, the official position of the Spanish government changed after Konsčak's research.

Konsčak undoubtedly utilized Father Kino's 1701 map template. On this template, he had to insert new toponyms, and correct Kino's errors, especially those related to the contours of the land in the Northern Gulf of California, as well as those pertaining to the islands inside the California Sea (*Mar de Californias*). The scale of Konsčak's map is expressed in Spanish and French miles, the measurements also used by Kino, and the geographic grid is indicated only for latitude. However, there are differences in the latitude of which they both indicate the scale along the left edge of the map. San Ignacio, on Kino's map, was located at approximately 27° N latitude and on Konsčak's, it was drawn at 28° N. So, between their measurements of latitude,



there is a difference of about 1°, but Kino's accuracy is better (Konsčak's measurements had a constant error of about 1°).

All toponyms mentioned in Konsčak's diary are, in fact, noted on his map for the first time. Namely, Kino only generally noted the names of peaks in the hinterland for Lower California and the names of only a few missionary outposts. Most of the toponyms on Konsčak's map refer to the names of bays, capes and islands and only a few colony names. He highlighted the localities of sources of drinking water (*aquaje*) with particular attention. As with Kino's, Konsčak's map shows a very schematic method of molehills to show the relief of the land. The coastline on Konsčak's map is very indented and shown with a lot of detail in relation to the generalized view that is found on Father Kino's template. Konsčak's particularly enhanced representation of the entire northern Gulf of California with the wetlands of the mouth of the Colorado River are, for the first time, accurately mapped on his map. Konsčak also achieved significant progress in the description of the island of *Isla Angel de la Guarda* and the other islands of the California Sea (his map is the first to note the existence of a rocky island in front of the Bay of San Felipe, which today is named after him, *Isla Consag*). Many places that, until that time, had not been marked on maps received names: Purgatorio Bay, San Juan de Pablo, San Pedro y Pablo, and San Felipe de Jesus; while many others, which already had names, appeared for the first time on the map.

Konsčak's map *Señño de California y su costa oriental* played a special role after which it was officially accepted that a Californian peninsula existed. His map of California was evaluated by the Spanish court and, on that basis, it was officially concluded that California was a peninsula. Although F. E. Kino and J. de Ugarte had claimed this finding on their own maps before him, the official position of the Spanish government changed after Konsčak's research and the publication of his maps.

Konsčak's map, together with his diary known as *Derrotero*, was printed in the Venegas-Burriel's book *Noticia de la California* (first edition published in Madrid, 1757). Namely, in order to prepare the work and corresponding maps of California, Burriel employed the help of Pedro Maria Nascimben for the purpose of making multiple copies of both Konsčak's maps. Based on these copies, Burriel gave shape to two copper plates of the maps, one that showed only the east coast and the other showing the whole peninsula. The first plate that shows only part of the peninsula was left with its original title, *Seno de Californias . . .*, but this was changed in 1747. The map that showed the whole of the peninsula was given the title *Mapa de la California, su golfo y provincias fronteras en el Continente de Nueva Espagna* and dated 1757. This map, on which he decorated its outer edge with elaborate engravings of the animals and natives of California, is one of the most beautiful maps of the time. Various versions of Konsčak's maps are included in all later editions of Venegas-Burriel's works, as well as many other widely distributed books at the time, such as *Nachrichten von der Amerikanischen Halbinsel Californien*, by Jesuit Jacob Bagaert (Manheim, 1772), *Storia dela California* by Mexican Jesuit Francesco Clavigero (Venice, 1789) or Denis Diderot's monumental work *Encyclopedie* (Paris, 1772).

## California as an Island



*Map of Ferdinand Konsčak, 1746, published in Venegas-Burriel*





*Map of peninsula by Konsčak, published in the English version of Venegas-Burriel, 1757*



*California as an Island*



*A Map of North America With the European Settlements & whatever else is remarkable in ye West Indies from the latest and best Observations by R.W. Seale, 1745, 18.5 x 15 inches #532*







*"A Chart of the World on Mercator's Projection" (c. 1599), sometimes known as the "Wright-Molyneux Map". Based on Edward Wright's projection of a globe engraved by English globe-maker Emery Molyneux in 1592, it was the first map to use Wright's improvements on Mercator's projection and was regarded as 16<sup>th</sup> century cartographic landmark. Unlike many contemporary maps and charts that represented the often fantastic speculations of their makers, Wright's map has a minimum of detail and leaves areas blank wherever geographic information was lacking. These undefined areas are especially evident along Wright's coastlines. Wright's map is also one of the earliest maps to use the name "Virginia".*

**Summary:** One of the most famous misconceptions in cartographic history is of California as an island. The origin of this error is *Las sergas de Esplandian*, a romantic novel written in 1510 by Garci Rodriguez de Montalvo, stating that "on the right hand of the Indies there is an island called California very close to the side of the Terrestrial Paradise; and it is peopled by black women, without any man among them, for they live in the manner of the Amazons."

Baja California, the Mexican peninsula that runs parallel to the mainland for hundreds of miles, was discovered in 1533 by a mutineer from Hernan Cortes' expedition into Mexico, followed by a trip by Cortes himself to that area (near present-

day La Paz, on the southern tip of the peninsula). The lay of the land led him to believe this to be the island of "California" from Montalvo's novel. Expeditions in 1539 and later seemed to indicate California was a peninsula, and at first it was thus shown on maps, including some by Mercator and Ortelius. Nevertheless, the idea of an insular California was revived, probably in part by the fictional accounts of Juan de Fuca. He claimed to have found a large opening in the western coast of North America, possibly the legendary "Northwest Passage". Further inspiration was the overland expedition by Juan de Onate, who descended the Colorado River (1604-5) and believed he saw the Gulf of California continuing off to the northwest. California reappeared on the map as an island for the first time in 1622 in a map by Michiel Colijn of Amsterdam, and this image would endure far into the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

The idealized view of California as an insular *Garden of Eden* at the edge of the known world was disproved by Father Eusebio Kino's expedition from 1698 to 1701. Kino proved that Baja California is connected to it in the north. Doubts remained, however, and the issue was finally laid to rest only with the expeditions of Juan Bautista de Anza (1774-76). Ironically, sometime in the future, California might actually become the island it was once thought to be: Tectonic activity will separate the area west of the San Andreas Fault from the mainland-although this might take thousands, if not millions, of years.

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